

REVILO PENDLETON OLIVER  
701 OHIO STREET  
URBANA, ILLINOIS

14 August 1966.

To Members of the Council of the John Birch Society:

On July 30, I resigned from the Council and from the Society itself. I also resigned as Associate Editor of American Opinion. The compelling reasons for my resignation were stated in my letter to Mr. Welch.

It was originally my intention to bring the question of my resignation before you, the members of the Council, at the next meeting for your decision—assuming that you do have the power to make decisions. I find, however, that Mr. Welch believes—or professes to believe—that I have been "conspiring" to "undermine" him, presumably out of ambition to replace him as head of the Society. I also hear that he has stated that three members of the Council are Communist agents. Although I was not named as one of them, so far as I know, it may be that he will see fit to include me in that category. I felt, therefore, that only my resignation would enable the Council, if the members are interested, to discuss the present status of the Society in an atmosphere as cleared of personalities as I can make it.

I enclose a copy of the statement which I am making to the press. You will note that it is couched in the mildest possible terms and eschews mention of the real issues. I am resolved not to elaborate on that statement or to make public my letter of resignation to Mr. Welch, unless he forces me to do so by grossly misrepresenting its contents or publicly making defamatory charges against me.

I urge each of you personally to investigate very thoroughly the present situation of the Society and the extent to which its leader does, in fact, determine its policies. I hope that the Society can be salvaged, but that is your responsibility.

Sincerely,

*Revilo P. Oliver*

Dear Tom:

*I hear that you are going to Belmont. I hope you can introduce some sanity in the places where it's needed, as well as please the boss's boss!*

*Revilo*

From R. P. Oliver,  
701 Ohio Street,  
Urbana, Illinois.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Professor Revilo P. Oliver, one of the founding members of the John Birch Society, issues the following statement:

"I have resigned from the Council of the John Birch Society (and from the Society itself) because I can no longer in conscience remain a member. I have also resigned as Associate Editor of American Opinion and I will no longer contribute to that magazine.

"I was one of the eleven men who met with Mr. Robert Welch in Indianapolis on December 9, 1958, when the Society was formed. The Mr. Welch who founded the Society was a man in whom I had great confidence.

"Since then, however, changes which have taken place internally in the organization and in its policies leave me no alternative but to dissociate myself from it."

###

111  
COPY FOR MR. THOMAS ANDERSON

REVILO PENDLETON OLIVER  
701 OHIO STREET  
URBANA, ILLINOIS

23 August 1966.

To Certain Members of the Council of the John Birch Society:

I received today a copy of the hectographed letter that Mr. Welch has addressed to the Council. So let's set the record straight.

For almost two years I have been perturbed—as I know some of you gentlemen have been—by the ever increasing ineffectiveness and internal disintegration of the John Birch Society. I became convinced that there was something seriously wrong in Belmont and undertook an investigation, utilizing various special sources of information available to me. The conclusion to which I found myself forced to come seemed to me, at first, utterly incredible, as I am sure that it will seem to you. I checked and cross-checked my information very carefully until I could no longer doubt.

On July 30, I wrote a letter of resignation which Mr. Welch in his memorandum says he has not seen but describes as "vitriolic." I enclose a copy of it herewith.

On August 5, the New York Times was informed by the Defamation League that on Thursday, August 4, Mr. Welch, accompanied by members of the Council, had flown to Urbana and demanded my resignation on the grounds that I am "anti-Semitic."

On Thursday, August 11, Messrs. Welch, Grede, and Montgomery did come to my house. As soon as they entered, I called their attention to the tape recorder conspicuously placed near the conference table and in operation. I naturally assumed that the object of the visit was to negotiate concerning my resignation, of which I had a carbon copy at hand. (The photocopy of the original from which the enclosed photocopy was made today was at that time in a place where I had deposited it for safe-keeping.)

Mr. Welch came equipped with a substitute letter of resignation for me to sign and copy for a special bulletin in which he was going to describe his great astonishment at receiving from me the letter which he had written for me. I enclose a photocopy of that amazing document.

When, after much fruitless discussion, I came to suspect that Messrs. Grede and Montgomery had not seen my letter of resignation, I stated that I had resigned on July 30. Mr. Welch said that he had not received my letter. I informed him that I had my carbon copy at hand, but he did not ask to see it. He did ask me to "type off" a copy of it, but, before I could reply, veered away to the question whether I wished the text of it made public and then to the advantages of announcing that I had resigned on July 30 "for private reasons." The three gentlemen then left the house. Mr. Welch did not then request me to send him a copy of my letter nor has he subsequently done so.

That was on August 11. On August 14, I released to the press the short statement of which I sent you a copy. I dared not wait longer, because—as I had explicitly told Messrs. Welch, Grede, and Montgomery on

the eleventh—I had precise information that on August 16 I was going to be smeared as "anti-Semitic" in a radio broadcast from Chicago by one of the members of the secret committee that now directs Mr. Welch. The smear was to be followed by some announcement from Belmont which would, in effect, confirm it. Even if the plan prefigured in the premature leak to the Times on August 5 was not followed, an announcement after the smear that I had already resigned "for private reasons" would have been interpreted as a noble effort to be kind to the vile wretch who had been ejected from the Society for his sins.

The smear-job, obviously designed to inflict the maximum damage on me here in Urbana, was cancelled a few hours before it was scheduled to go on the air. I have thus escaped for the moment, but I have no illusions about the ruthlessness and perseverance of the implacable enemies I have brought upon myself by my folly in trusting Mr. Robert Welch.

I cannot, of course, anticipate what will be said in the coming meeting of the Council. Mr. Welch's hectographed memorandum reassures me on some points. I subjoin to this letter brief notes on some points that may be raised at the meeting. I have no wish to wash the Society's dirty linen in public, but I am tired of being Bob Welch's whipping boy.

I simply cannot afford to send all these photocopies to every member of the Council. I am therefore sending copies only to the ten men who seem to me most directly concerned or interested, and I am also sending a set to Mr. Robert Welch.

Sincerely,

*Reverend P. Oliver*

REVILO PENDLETON OLIVER  
701 OHIO STREET  
URBANA, ILLINOIS

MEMORANDUM TO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL CONCERNING ALLEGATIONS THAT  
MAY BE MADE IN THE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 10.

(1) You may be told of "collusion" between Dr. Draskovich and myself. There was none. When I resigned on July 30, I did not know that Dr. Draskovich was going to resign. When he resigned on August 9, he did not know that I had resigned. Let me add, however, that I fully endorse his ten-page analysis of the failure of the John Birch Society, of which you have doubtless received a copy. Dr. Draskovich was the only member of the Council who has had—thus far—first-hand experience of a complete Communist take-over.

(2) You may be told that my resignation was somehow caused by my speech in Boston at the New England Rally for God, Family, and Country on July 2. That simply is not true. On November 14, 1965, I told Mr. Welch, in a letter of which he did acknowledge receipt,

"More than two years ago . . . I was informed . . . that the Communists had determined to separate me from American Opinion. At the time, I did not suppose that that could easily be done. I now see that that purpose will eventually be accomplished, in one way or another. (Only last week, for example, I heard that a new coördinator is describing me as a 'problem' that you are going to 'solve' just as soon as my deplorable 'following in the Society' has been taken care of.)

. . .  
"I am mindful that seven years ago I gave you the only pledge of loyalty that I have given to any man. I have thus far kept that pledge honorably, despite the protests of my friends and physicians, incidentally ruining my own academic career and impairing, perhaps permanently, my own health. I shall continue to keep it, so long as I can honorably do so."

I could, in that letter, have described in detail precisely the procedure that has in fact been followed. I expected the break to come in April of this year, but went on working until my information concerning the actual control of the Society was complete and indubitable.

(3) You may be told that my speech in Boston was somehow "contrary to the policies of the John Birch Society." There was no significant statement in that speech that I had not made, months or years before, in the pages of American Opinion, without eliciting the slightest objection or adverse criticism from Mr. Welch. I do not doubt Mr. Welch's assertion that he does not have time to read the Society's official publication, so I am not in a position to question his statement that the views that I expressed in those pages are contrary to his thinking. I merely remark that I have never claimed to be a mind-reader.

(4) You may be told that my speech, although obviously not "anti-Semitic," nevertheless offended certain Jews, thus endangering the supply of what

Mr. Welch calls "Jew money." I merely observe that in the monthly bulletin for May, 1966, Mr. Welch, on page 28, recommends that all American Opinion Bookstores advertise that they carry in stock the works of Douglas Reed, of which the best known, Somewhere South of Suez, virtually identifies Soviet Communism with Zionism, with special emphasis on the latter as a conspiracy "to reduce the Christian area [of the whole world] to slave status." If I erred in assuming that Mr. Welch knew what he was doing, I am sorry.

(5) You will probably be told that I have been "undermining the policies" of the Society by remaining on speaking terms with the well-known radio broadcaster, Mr. Richard Cotten. My first real contact with Mr. Cotten began when I persuaded him not to sue the John Birch Society for libel after a Jewish coördinator, acting in his official capacity, had stated several times in the presence of witnesses that Mr. Cotten was a man who sexually molested children. I probably saved the Society from having to pay a judgement of \$150,000 or more and from damning notoriety. For that, I sincerely apologize.

(6) You will probably be told, as I have been, that while I mean well, my presence in the Society endangers Mr. Welch's grand strategy to defeat the Communists by destroying [!] the Defamation League, an organization with which he officially stated that the John Birch Society was officially co-operating in 1963 and subsequently. Get him to explain his grand strategy to you. If you can buy that one, gentlemen, I am wasting paper in writing now.

(7) You will doubtless be told, as usual, how the Society is flourishing. I suggest that you have a right to know (a) what the present membership is, and (b) how many members have been recruited, and how many have been lost in each year of the Society's existence. I suggest, further, that you should ascertain what the real financial position of the Society now is. But, after all, that does not concern me. It's your baby now. And whatever it does will be done in your name.

*Rein P. Oliver*